

Message Text

SECRET

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12

ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-03 SP-02 L-01

INR-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00 EB-03 RSC-01 SAM-01 /044 W

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P 060955Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1841

S E C R E T TRIPOLI 0015

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG LY

SUBJECT: LIBYAN EMBARGO ON OIL SHIPMENTS TO U.S.

REF: TRIPOLI 0001

1. DURING MEETING WITH CHARGE JAN 5, HUSNI SHAABAN, DIRECTOR OF NORTH AMERICAN AFFAIRS AT MFA, ASKED WHETHER CHARGE HAD HEARD THAT LIBYA HAD LIFTED OIL EMBARGO AGAINST U.S. CHARGE SAID WE HAD HEARD REPORTS TO THIS EFFECT, AND ASKED WHETHER SHAABAN COULD CONFIRM THEM OFFICIALLY. SHAABAN SAID THAT HE COULD. HE HAD TALKED WITH MFA UNDERSECRETARY DURDAH, WHO HAD TOLD HIM EMBARGO HAD IN FACT BEEN LIFTED. SHAABAN HOPED "PERSONALLY" THAT THIS WOULD REMOVE ONE OBSTACLE TO BETTER BILATERAL RELATIONS. IN REPLY TO QUESTION, HE SAID IT HAD NOT YET BEEN DECIDED WHETHER THERE WOULD BE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT.

2. OIL COMPANIES OPERATING IN LIBYA HAVE NOT BEEN NOTIFIED OF LIBYAN "DECISION" TO LIFT EMBARGO. IN OUR OPINION LIBYANS ARE SIMPLY TRYING TO MAKE THE BEST OF AN EMBARRASSING PREDICAMENT, SINCE EMBARGO HAS BEEN CIRCUMVENTED WITH FULL KNOWLEDGE OF LIBYAN GOVT FOR SOME TIME. FACED BY PRESS REPORTS WITH CHOICE OF CLAIMING EMBARGO STILL ON OR ADMITTING LIBYAN OIL IS LEAKING TO U.S., THEY SEEM TO HAVE DECIDED TO TRY TO HAVE IT BOTH WAYS, MAKING NO ANNOUNCEMENT AND PRIVATELY

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SEEKING TO CLAIM CREDIT FROM US FOR DOING WHAT THEY HAVE TO

DO ANYWAY TO MARKET A LITTLE MORE OF THEIR OVERPRICED OIL.
WHEN OTHER ARAB STATES LIFTED EMBARGO LAST MARCH, TYPICAL
LIBYAN PUBLIC STATEMENT WAS, "LIBYA WILL NOT RECONSIDER
ITS DECISION UNLESS U.S. CHANGES ITS AGGRESSIVE POLICY
AGAINST ARABS" (LIBYAN RADIO, MARCH 18, 1974). TO PUBLICLY
LIFT EMBARGO NOW WOULD BE TO TACITLY ADMIT POLITICAL
ATTITUDE OF U.S. HAS "IMPROVED". UNTIL THIS HAPPENS,
AND WE DOUBT THAT IT WILL, LIBYANS HAVE ONLY
TAKEN EASY WAY OUT, AND DESERVE NO THANKS FROM US.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, PETROLEUM, EMBARGOES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: woolflhd
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TRIPOL00015
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750004-1001
From: TRIPOLI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750174/aaaacnmn.tel
Line Count: 71
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 75 TRIPOLI 0001
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: woolflhd
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 AUG 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <02 DEC 2003 by woolflhd>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LIBYAN EMBARGO ON OIL SHIPMENTS TO U.S.
TAGS: ENRG, LY
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006